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Moderatus No. II

Boston Gazette, 28 December 1789

Messieurs PRINTERS, The fears and suspicions on the minds of the friends of government, so called, soon induced them to action. They attempted by every means in their power to instill the like suspicions into the minds of the moderate men, who had likewise property to protect and desired to have a government capable of affording them the protection they wished and had a right to expect. The moderate men, always in favour of such a government as would afford such protection and at the same time secure to the great body of the people their rights and privileges, were inclined to listen to them; for from a detestation, natural to all good men, of such violences and excesses as had been recently committed [Shays's Rebellion], they were disposed to fear the worst from such as had been the perpetrators thereof. The friends of government now called Aristocrats, emboldened by the expectation that they had secured to their interests the moderate men, proceeded more openly in their operations and attempted to remove from office such men as they supposed were not sufficiently attached to their views and had always proved themselves the firm and steadfast friends of the people, and to put into their place such as had higher ideas of the rights and privileges that property ought to give to the possessors to govern and command those who had none. The eyes of the moderate men were now opened, they always paid attention and respect to the rights of the people, and always thought that all government should originate from them, they now began to think that the suspicions of the Insurgents were not without foundation, and therefore though they entertained no good opinion of the character and conduct of the Insurgents hitherto, yet, equally despising the attempts to arbitrary government now visible in the conduct of a few, they so far accorded with the Insurgents, that those attempts of the Aristocrats were in a great measure thwarted.

The Aristocrats now found that their interest and influence were not as extensive as they had fondly imagined, for many of the more active and zealous of the moderate men now began to exert themselves equally to interest the great body of the people in the affairs of government and recall to their minds the great republican principles which led to our grand revolution, to which *some* of the Aristocrats had always been strangers. — The Aristocrats fearing that their plans would be entirely frustrated, from the influence of those Republicans, now so called, endeavoured to lessen their influence by insinuating that they were leagued with the Insurgents and with them had the same objects in view; a distribution of property, a paper money system and a number such idle schemes were attributed equally to the Republicans and the Insurgents, and they were represented as the same men, though nothing was more distant from the truth in the opinion of

those who would consider and reflect.—These measures had some effect in adding to their party a number of strangers, who had come among us since or during the late war, and some young men who knew not either the principles of the revolution or the Patriots who had been nobly instrumental in effecting it. Notwithstanding this increase of their party, the moderate men still held the balance on the side of the Republicans, though they saw that in some instances the severity and perhaps austerity of their principles were too great for the present day.—yet they and with them the great body of the people knew in whom they had before confided, and from the events, they experienced their confidence was not misplaced: Therefore they rightly judged that to desert those in our prosperity who had been our greatest and best friends in adversity, would be the highest ingratitude, and to do this to give the preference to such as had been opposed to, or at least stood indifferent spectators of the progress of the revolution, would be political madness.

The consideration of the adoption of the constitution became now a matter of real consequence and importance to all parties; the Aristocrats to a man were for its adoption at all events, with or without amendments, almost without consideration, it having proceeded from a body in whom they thought they could safely confide; while there were objecters to and opposers of it from many and various causes—this gave occasion to a new denomination of parties, the Federal and Antifederal—which will afford subject for another paper.

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